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REMARKS

Claims 32-43 are pending in this application.

1. The Examiner has rejected claims 32-43 under 35 C.F.R. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Malek et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,130,238, July 14, 1992) in view of Earle et al. (U.S. Patent 5,925,518, July 20, 1999).

Applicants respectfully traverse. The cited patents of Malek et al. and Earle et al. do not render the presently claimed subject matter unpatentable since Earle et al. is not available as prior art.

This application is a continuation of application Serial No. 08/474,927, filed June 7, 1995, now U.S. Patent No. 6,048,687, which was a continuation of application Serial No. 08/124,686, filed September 22, 1993, now abandoned. Therefore the effective filing date of the present application is September 22, 1993, which is nearly two years prior to the effective filing date of the Earle et al. patent, May 23, 1995. The Examiner is referred to applicant's Amendment filed on October 17, 2000 in response to the Official Action of April 17, 2000 wherein the specification was amended to reflect the above continuation sequence of the present application.

The rejection of claims 32-43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for the reasons set forth in paragraph 4 of the Official Action, page 3, are respectfully traversed for the single reason that the rejection relies on Earle et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,925,518, filed May 23, 1995. Therefore the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

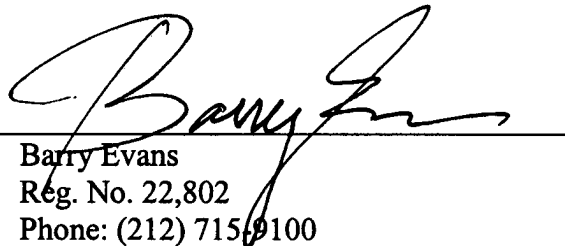
2. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the withdrawal of the double-patenting rejection as set forth in paragraph 5 of the Official Action, page 8.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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